

PROFESSIONAL FORUM



World War II History Japanese Monographs and Studies

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The government of Japan, unlike that of its German ally in World War II, survived its defeat. Less than six weeks after Japan's formal surrender on the U.S.S. *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, that government was ordered, on 12 October 1945, to establish "a bureau for investigations concerned with the compilation of sufficient data to obtain a complete historical war record." This was the seed of a historical program that eventually produced 184 Japanese monographs, a study on Japanese night combat, 13 Japanese studies on Manchuria, and a number of other studies. All of these sources were intended to be used in the preparation of the U.S. Army's official history of World War II.

The official records of the Japanese Army and Navy had been largely destroyed, either by the U.S. Army Air Force's incendiary bombing raids on Tokyo or deliberately by the Japanese themselves at the end of the war. Since few supporting documents were available for the U.S. Army to use in writing and compiling its own history of the war, therefore, the demobilization bureaus of the Japanese Demobilization Ministry summoned former officers (mainly those who had participated in the various

theaters or who had served on staffs or in specific activities) to serve as "authors" in this program. These officers had to rely upon personal recollections, diaries that had been kept, and the few available fragmentary records.

IMPORTANT

The initial drafts of the monographs produced were said to be "generally spotty in coverage and frequently inaccurate as to dates and strengths." Consequently, efforts were soon begun to revise and complete them. The late Louis Morton, who wrote several volumes on the war in the Pacific for the official U.S. Army historical series, believed that "though the series contains large gaps and the individual studies vary in quality, it constitutes the most important Japanese source on Japanese operations in the Pacific and Asia in World War II."

The overall project was originally called the Foreign Histories Program of the Foreign Histories Division, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2/3, Headquarters U.S. Army Japan. When the Office of the Chief of Military History became interested

in this program in 1950, the Japanese Research Division was organized within the Historical Division, Department of the Army. The program was extended in 1956 and continued until its termination on 15 April 1960.

The Japanese monographs cover primarily operational topics, although several of them deal with the political background and considerations of the war, administration and logistics, naval operations, and the defense of the homeland.

The Manchurian studies are highly detailed and worth studying today. Two of them are particularly useful—"Strategic Study of Manchuria's Military Topography and Geography" and "A Study of Strategic and Tactical Peculiarities of Far Eastern Russia and the Soviet Far Eastern Forces."

The other studies that were completed include important geographical, climatic, and tactical information for operations in many Asian countries, including the Philippines, New Guinea, Borneo, Burma, Thailand, and China, as well as Soviet Russia. It is also important to note that some of these additional studies addressed subjects outside the years in which the United States was engaged

INTRODUCTION AND GUIDE (Vol. 1).

Editor's Introduction.

Table of Contents to all volumes.

History of the Japanese Monograph Program.

Guide to Japanese Monographs and Japanese Studies on Manchuria.

Inventories of files from the Japanese Research Division.

Collection of Japanese records, 1928-1947.

Chronology of the Pacific War (from Japanese point of view), September 1931-November 1945.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE WAR (Vol. 2).

Political Strategy Prior to Outbreak of War—five monographs.

Planning of Japanese Invasion Operations Against the Philippines.

Two other documents.

COMMAND, ADMINISTRATION, AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS (Vol. 3).

Seven items, including "Principles of Night Combat" (Part 1), and a statement on "The Use of the Atomic Bomb."

THE NAVAL ARMAMENT PROGRAM AND NAVAL OPERATIONS (Vols. 4 & 5).

Ten monographs, including "Pearl Harbor Operations: General Outline of Order and Plans" (Vol. 4).

Six monographs, two special studies, and one document (Vol. 5).

THE SOUTHERN AREA (Vols. 6 & 7).

Six monographs, including records of operations in the Netherlands, East Indies, Borneo, French Indo-China, Thailand, and Burma (Vol. 6).

Two monographs, one group interrogation, and one statement (Vol. 7).

CHINA, MANCHURIA, AND KOREA (Vols. 8 & 9).

Four monographs and one Manchurian study (Vol. 8).

One monograph and "Strategic Study of Manchuria's Military Topography and Geography," (Vol. 9).

JAPAN AND THE SOVIET UNION (Vols. 10 & 11).

Japanese Operational Planning Against the USSR (Vol. 10).

Intelligence Planning Against the USSR Army (Vol. 10).

Small Wars and Border Problems Through 1938 (Vol. 10).

The Nomonhan Incident (Vol. 11).

A Study of Strategic and Tactical Peculiarities of Far Eastern Russia and Soviet Far Eastern Forces (Vol. 11).

Naval Operations Against Soviet Russia (Vol. 11).

DEFENSE OF THE HOMELAND AND END OF THE WAR (Vol. 12).

Three monographs, three documents, two statements, and one interrogation.

THE SINO-JAPANESE AND CHINESE CIVIL WARS (Vols. 13, 14, & 15).

History of the Sino-Japanese War, I (Vol. 13).

History of the Sino-Japanese War, II (Vol. 14).

Military Campaigns in China, 1924-1951 (Vol. 14).

PLA Unit History (Vol. 14).

Civil War in China, 1945-50 (Vol. 15).

in war with Japan—topics on the Japanese invasion of China, for example, as well as studies of the phases of the Chinese Civil War after World War II.

The Japanese monographs, the special study on Japanese Army night combat, and the Japanese studies on Manchuria are now deposited at the Army's Center of Military History in Washington, D.C. They vary in length from 3 to 409 pages, with an average of about 87 pages.

Forty-seven of the most interesting and informative studies have been published in the 15-volume *War in Asia and the Pacific* series (Garland Publishing Company, New York,

1980). These studies have been supplemented by 19 related documents from the Center of Military History and include statements Japanese officials made upon interrogation as well as translations of significant Japanese documents. (The basic contents of the published volumes are shown in the accompanying box.) This series complements the 24-volume *World War II German Military Studies* series also published by Garland Publishing Company (see *INFANTRY*, March-April 1988, pages 17-19).

A number of the studies not included in the published series are of potential interest to infantrymen:

Manchurian Studies:

- Volume V. Infantry Operations. (A study of infantry organization, training, tactical principles, and equipment.)

- Volume VI. Armor Operations. (A study of the formation of armored units in Manchuria, emphasizing the peculiar problems presented by the weather and terrain.)

- Volume VII. Supporting Arms and Services. (Part 1. Artillery and Antiaircraft Artillery Operations; Part 2. Engineer, Signal, and Railway Operations.)

- Volume VIII. Logistics in Manchuria.

- Volume IX. Climatic Factors. (Very important for studying the effects of cold weather on military operations in Manchuria, emphasizing the effects of extremely low temperatures on men, animals, and machines. Also important for studying other aspects of the climate such as sudden variations of temperature, precipitation, droughts, dust storms, and the like.)

Japanese Night Combat:

- Part 2. Appendix: Excerpts from Japanese Training Manuals.

- Part 3. Supplement: Night Combat Examples. (Examples of the successful employment in night combat operations of Japanese Army units of various sizes, taken from the Russo-Japanese War, the China Incident, and World War II.)

Both the 15-volume *War in Asia and the Pacific* series and the 24-volume *World War II German Military Studies* series contain a wealth of hard-to-find primary-source material. They are therefore invaluable to military historians, graduate students, and professional infantrymen who want to profit from the mistakes of their predecessors.

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